2007–2008

Saskatchewan

Provincial Budget

Performance Plan

Saskatchewan Communications Network

Minister's Message

As Minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Communications Network (SCN), it is my pleasure to submit the Performance Plan for 2007-08 and beyond. This Performance Plan reflects SCN as a regional public education broadcaster and outlines the commitment by SCN to provide public access to cultural, informational, and educational programming, to enable the regional film and television industry, and to support remote access satellite technologies.

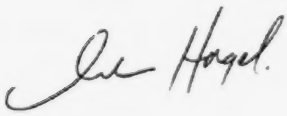
As a modern, regional storyteller, SCN continues the ancient traditions wherein the role of storyteller means sharing stories that are high in educational value, and conveying the history and culture of our community and its people. It means being teacher, entertainer and keeper of cultural values. We use the most advanced satellite broadcast technology in Canada to deliver commercial free, educational programming regularly to over 250,000 viewers, distance education opportunities to about 3,500 learners in remote communities, and digital Internet connectivity to about 150 remote schools and libraries.

SCN pursues joint initiatives through strategic alliances to expand the broadcast network's regional content and to address issues of infrastructure sustainability. SCN will work with other provinces and the federal government to develop programs, policies and infrastructure that enable the film and television industry, and that respond to public demand for both regional programming and distance learning.

We use public forums, regional television series, and documentaries to address the current and topical issues of the day with a regional focus. For example, the *Straight Talk* series presents recent documentaries by leading film producers covering many aspects of substance abuse from both scientific and societal perspectives. Families will learn to identify the warning signs, where to go for help, and strategies for keeping our youth safe from harm. Another recent series by a Saskatchewan film producer, *Edifice & Us,* tells the stories of some of Saskatchewan's most interesting buildings. You can see these buildings as never before through the eyes of the people who create, inhabit, restore, and care for them.

This year SCN will continue use of its strategic alliances and available resources to support its role as the regional public education broadcaster. In this role, SCN will develop new regional programming and strands of acquired programming focusing on areas of public interest, such as First Nations, the green economy and literacy. Building on the highly acclaimed regional series developed for the centennial, SCN will use emerging film producers from Saskatchewan to continue new series such as *Fifteen Minutes of Fame II*. This series focuses on the communities and people of Saskatchewan, giving people an opportunity to tell their own stories and see them on our own public education broadcasting station.

I am committed to fulfilling the key goals, objectives and actions contained in our Performance Plan, and will report on SCN's progress to the people of Saskatchewan in the SCN Annual Report in July 2008.



Glenn Hagel
Minister Responsible for the
Saskatchewan Communications Network Corporation

Who We Are

The Saskatchewan Communications Network (SCN) operates as a Treasury Board Crown agency of the Government of Saskatchewan in accordance with *The Communications Network Corporation Act (1989).* The SCN board of directors manages the business of the corporation and appoints the Chief Executive Officer. The board of directors of the corporation consists of not more than 11 persons appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council and is accountable to Cabinet. Additional governance and accountability is established through the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation who serves as the Minister Responsible for SCN.

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) licensed SCN as a non-commercial, English-language television network in 1991. The mandate of SCN is to undertake responsibilities as the regional, public broadcaster that delivers cultural, informational and educational programming and enables the regional film and television industry. To deliver on this mandate, SCN undertakes the following three functions that provide an integrated approach to SCN's service to clients:

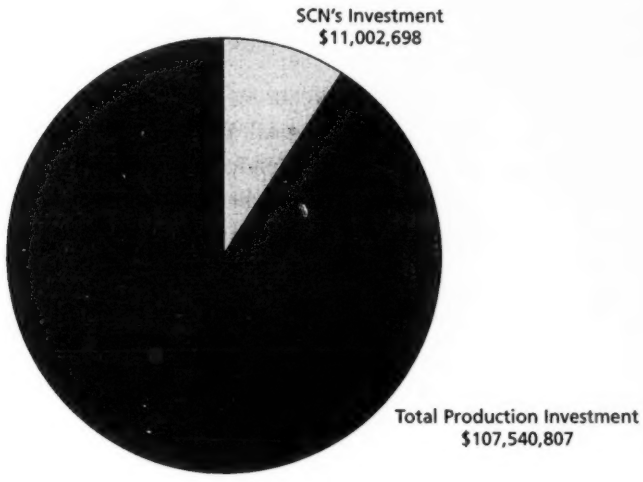
- Public Broadcast – SCN's Public Broadcast Network (PBN)
  SCN's broadcast schedule is unique as it reflects the rich culture and heritage of our region and programs supporting Saskatchewan curricula.
- Distance Learning – SCN's E-Learning Network (ELN)
  SCN has the capability to distribute televised K-12, SIAST and university classes to over 200 locations across the province.
- Connectivity – SCN's Technology and Infrastructure Services
  SCN also provides satellite access to outside agencies, allowing learning opportunities that would not otherwise be available.

OPERATING A PUBLIC BROADCAST NETWORK (PBN)

SCN purchases broadcast rights for programming and helps fund the development of projects undertaken by local independent producers. SCN's financial contribution to projects in the Saskatchewan film and television community has increased to 44 per cent of SCN's programming budget in 2006-07. Additional funding could be used to increase this percentage further, through the licencing of broadcast rights from Saskatchewan producers. This would have a direct impact on the sustainability of the industry and stimulate spin off economic activity throughout the province. SCN's financial contributions often enables other out-of-province investment bringing new dollars into the province.

Historically, for every dollar SCN contributed to a Saskatchewan production, over nine times the amount is generated in production activity. SCN has supported over 600 local productions in 15 years on its public broadcasting network. SCN's $11.0 million investment into regional programming has leveraged over $107.5 million in jobs and other economic activities in Saskatchewan, (Source: Aggregate data compiled from commercially confidential producer budget submissions to SCN), as highlighted in the chart below.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY GENERATED IN THE SASKATCHEWAN FILM AND VIDEO INDUSTRY APRIL 1, 1989 - MARCH 31, 2006



Television viewers are influenced by programming relevance, quality, availability and platform of delivery. The increased number of specialty channels available leads to the potential fragmentation of viewing audience. As well, new platforms such as web-based video, video iPods and mobility devices are also competing for content and viewer attention. There are no clear financial models for the creation and sale of material to the new platforms, and producers are concerned. This creates both an opportunity and threat. The opportunity may be the possibility of reduced programming costs for generic material and the threat is fewer viewers will turn to SCN with more choices available.

SCN is considering new ways to distribute regional programming, such as Internet streaming and podcasting. These initiatives help to foster an appeal to include younger demographics, as typically SCN viewers are older or young families with children. SCN currently provides *Straight Talk* segments on the website. The youth are also appointment viewers (utilizing Personal Video Recorders – PVRs) and surfers (looking for immediate attraction); therefore, promotion of content and fresh inventory is key to attracting these viewers.

While it is important to be aware and sensitive to the changing broadcast industry dynamics, content relevance is the key to success. SCN's programming strategy is to provide a regional voice within this highly competitive broadcast environment. It has demonstrated this commitment through involvement at the early stages of regional production thereby enabling the producer to secure other funds and create content that is regionally relevant. SCN's commitment to regional programming has contributed to the increase in the number of emerging Saskatchewan producers.

SCN's regional series format provides sustainability for small to mid-size companies. These are series versus one-time productions, and therefore, allow for continued growth versus stop-and-start activity. A recent call for regional series proposals experienced a substantial increase in response from the production industry, as evidenced by an increased number of proposals received.

SCN's commitment to regional content plus increased industry interest in the production of such content has also "raised the bar" in the production community. Both the quality and quantity of regional programming has experienced growth.

Through initiatives such as the regional series project and hosted anthology series such as *Prairie Eye* and *Shift Perspective*, SCN provides the viewer the opportunity to learn more about their region, and to gain a different perspective about relevant issues. SCN responded to the government and audience priorities with four new documentary strands that focus on substance abuse, environmental issues, Aboriginal issues and youth-oriented issues.

Many Saskatchewan productions appearing on SCN, including such examples as *renegadepress.com, Back to Everest, 13 Seconds...The Kent State Shootings* and *Cosmic Currents* are not only successful in the province, but are also successful in national and international marketplaces. These productions have become a new export for the province increasing the economic growth in Saskatchewan. This national and international recognition acknowledges the talent base in Saskatchewan and validates Saskatchewan's ability to produce world-class film and television. The chart below provides details of some recent productions and awards.

SCN ENABLED LOCAL PRODUCER EXAMPLES

Production Title	Company	Synopsis	Achievements
Renegadepress.com	Verite Films	This is a dramatic youth series about an on-line newspaper and the teens that run it.	Gemini Award Five Gemini Nominations Showcase Awards including Best Children/Youth and Best Direction
Christmas at Wapos Bay	Dark Thunder Productions	Stop-motion animated children's program. Three children visit their Moshum at his trapline cabin to learn about trapping and fishing.	Golden Sheaf Awards, Showcase Awards, multiple nominations including Native American Television Alliance and Schlingel-Germany's International Children's Festival
13 Seconds...The Kent State Shootings	Partners in Motion	This documentary revisits the events of 31 years ago leading to the Ohio National Guard opening fire on Kent State students protesting the Vietnam War.	Multi-award winner including an Emmy
Cosmic Currents	Kahani Entertainment	Cosmic Currents places a fresh spin on universal questions of ethnicity, home and self.	2004 Gemini Award Honourable mention – Columbus International Film and Video Festival NextFest Winner Reel Diversity Winner Showcase Nominee
Two Worlds Colliding	Tasha Hubbard/NFB	Documentary chronicling the Saskatoon "freezing deaths" and the schism between the Aboriginal community and the police force.	2005 Gemini Award Golden Sheaf Award Screened International Film Festival, South Africa

OPERATING A DISTANCE LEARNING NETWORK

SCN's E-Learning Network (ELN), a closed circuit television satellite network, delivers credit programs for Saskatchewan Learning and Advanced Education and Employment. SCN uses this infrastructure to distribute video, audio, and other on-line and streaming technologies to provide formal education opportunities to Saskatchewan residents in underserved remote and rural communities.

Over 200 communities have the capacity to receive the televised E-Learning Network classes. These school and regional college locations, with more than 270 classrooms, span the entire province: as far north as Black Lake near the Northwest Territories; south near the Canada/US border in Coronach; and in many communities bordering our neighbouring provinces. Community demands for televised distance instruction continues to grow – over the last four years the number of classrooms equipped to receive the ELN has risen by seven per cent per annum.

Distance learners benefit from this blended technology approach (television, phone/fax, print and Internet) as Saskatchewan Learning and Advanced Education and Employment utilizes these media to teach courses that are not otherwise available at remote locations. Student demand for televised credit classes on the ELN has increased. In the 2003-04 school year, approximately 3,000 students registered for televised classes. In 2004-05, registrations climbed by approximately eight per cent to 3,230. In the 2005-06 school year, enrollment spiked to over 3,330, and in 2006-07 enrollment reached about 3,500 students enjoying the benefits of televised education. This increase is also significant as it is occurring at a time of decline in the rural population.

PROVIDING SATELLITE TECHNOLOGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

SCN, through its Technology and Infrastructure Services, provides satellite access and support to enable connectivity and deliver programming in the province. Along with its own networks, SCN also provides satellite distribution services and support for outside agencies such as: the province's CommunityNet through which SCN delivers Internet to schools and government agencies; the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly, distributing live broadcasts of the Proceedings; and individual private and public sector organizations using the videoconferencing services of the Special Event Network (SEN).

The CommunityNet initiative provides satellite delivered wide area computer networking and Internet access in areas where high-speed connectivity is unavailable by traditional means. SCN receives funding from Saskatchewan Learning and Advanced Education and Employment and Keewatin Career Development Corporation to support the satellite infrastructure that connects thousands of learners through approximately 100 remote provincial schools, First Nations schools, and small libraries. Communities served include: as far north as Camsell Portage near the Northwest Territories; south, in North Portal, on the Canada/US border; and in many communities along the borders of our neighbouring provinces. SCN makes these connections through its two-way Digital Satellite Network (DSN2), providing equitable access for other learners on the Learning Sector portion of CommunityNet.

To achieve the broad array of public purposes, as noted above, SCN employs 34.5 full-time equivalent staff (FTE).

Plan at a Glance

As SCN prepares for the 2007-08 year, challenges such as technological upgrades and program standards have been considered. This Performance Plan continues the strategic direction of previous SCN plans, and addresses the environmental challenges in the year ahead. The plan focuses on SCN's role as a contributor to economic development, distributor of cultural information and education, and facilitator of access to information for Saskatchewan people in remote and rural areas.

Development of this plan has been influenced by input received from a variety of stakeholders. SCN contracts several annual surveys, such as a public viewer survey, a stakeholder survey, Friends of SCN survey and an employee survey. Also in 2006, SCN participated in the National Media Technology survey; this survey monitored trends in the use of new platforms. The viewer survey provides invaluable information about the viewing habits of the general public and audience preferences about the SCN schedule and programming. The stakeholder and employee surveys provide SCN with a level of satisfaction of its suppliers, technical clients and SCN staff.

Stakeholders, such as the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation (CYR), recognize SCN as a leader in commissioning and broadcasting Saskatchewan stories and contributing to the sustainability of the film and video industry in the province. The Saskatchewan Motion Picture Industry Association (SMPIA) and the Saskatchewan Film Producers Association (SFPA) also reaffirm the importance of the purchasing power of the SCN broadcast licence and the developmental role of SCN in "growing" emerging producers and writers. Saskatchewan Learning and Saskatchewan Advanced Education and Employment support SCN in its key role in the delivery of formal and informal educational opportunities on behalf of the department at both the K-12 and post-secondary levels.

The goals and objectives identified in the following are multi-year in nature. SCN will work towards achieving its objectives and through these will realize our broader long-term goals. For each objective, a number of key actions and performance measures for the 2007-08 fiscal year are identified. SCN will report on actual, compared to planned progress after year-end. This will be presented in SCN's 2007-08 Annual Report. Future performance plans will continue to evolve always cognizant of the ever-changing environment within which SCN operates.

OUR VISION

As a modern storyteller in the ancient tradition, SCN will be teacher, entertainer and keeper of cultural values.

GOAL 1

Cultural affirmation

OBJECTIVE 1 – *Meet the cultural needs of the Saskatchewan television viewing audience*

Performance Measures

- Percentage of viewers as a total of all television viewers who value regional programming
- Percentage of on-air regional programming as a total of all SCN programming

OBJECTIVE 2 – *Meet the public education broadcast needs of the Saskatchewan viewing audience*

Performance Measures

- Percentage of viewers as a total of all television viewers who value public education broadcasting
- Percentage of current SCN viewers satisfied with programming
- Hours of program inventory annually maintained and replaced

GOAL 2

Economic opportunity

OBJECTIVE 1 – *Leverage investment in Saskatchewan's film and video industry from national broadcasters, the federal government and other funding agencies through SCN's purchase of a film program's broadcast licence*

Performance Measures

- Percentage of SCN productions involving regional producers as a total of all SCN film and television productions
- Percentage of Canadian Television Fund (CTF) funding directed to Saskatchewan productions as a total of the CTF funds administered by SCN

OBJECTIVE 2 – *Leverage economic activity in the Saskatchewan film and video industry through increased expenditure on regional programming*

Performance Measures

- Percentage of annual programming budget to acquire regional programs
- Percentage of satisfaction of direct clients with SCN services

GOAL 3

Access to information and educational opportunities

OBJECTIVE 1 – *Increase distance learning and training opportunities*

Performance Measures

- **Service reliability of networks**
- **Number of new opportunities created**

2007-08 Financial Overview

Provincial investment in SCN to promote cultural affirmation, economic opportunity and increase access to information and educational opportunities is projected at $5.997 million for 2007-08. The provincial investment comprises approximately 75 per cent of SCN's annual budget with other revenue resulting from cost recoverable services, donations and sponsorship.

Approximately 24 per cent of SCN's budget expenditures are infrastructure costs. This infrastructure is utilized to distribute SCN's networks and other technical services. Additionally, approximately three per cent of SCN's expenditures are committed to future year broadcast programs. The future year commitments by SCN are necessary to sustain consistent broadcast signal quality while maintaining an adequate flow of quality broadcast material.

The breakdown of current SCN spending is shown below:

2007-08 ESTIMATES	*(in thousands of dollars)*	
REVENUES		
Provincial grant – operating	$	5,997
Data transmission over satellite		1,445
Video transmission over satellite		326
Donations and program sponsorship		293
TOTAL REVENUES	$	8,001
EXPENSES		
Broadcast Network	$	4,606
E-Learning Network		1,483
Other technical networks		1,785
Total Expenditures	$	7,875
Less: Capital acquisitions		(2,144)
Plus: Amortization		2,147
TOTAL EXPENSES	$	7,878
FTE		34.50

Trends and Issues

SCN operates in a dynamic environment and experiences both diverse and unique challenges and opportunities. Strategic planning responds to both the current state of the industry and to longer-term trends and emerging opportunities.

BROADCAST ENVIRONMENT

In 2006, SCN completed the broadcast licence renewal process as required by the *Broadcast Act of Canada.* On February 13, 2007, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) published its decision to renew the SCN public broadcast licence for seven years to August 31, 2013, the maximum allowable. This renewal is a solid reaffirmation of the role of SCN in the national broadcast mosaic, as a critical public institution that provides regional programming reflecting our prairie culture and educational needs. The conditions of the licence requires the broadcast of a minimum of 60 per cent Canadian content during the broadcast day and 50 per cent during the evening broadcast period. The licensee shall also ensure that not less than 75 per cent of all programming is closed captioned, beginning no later than September 1, 2012. The trend in other licence renewals is towards 100 per cent closed captioning; however, the CRTC recognized the special circumstances at SCN, a modest annual budget and the non-commercial nature thereby lessening the condition.

A number of complex technical challenges continue to evolve and play a large role in the future direction of the Broadcast Network. These challenges include High Definition TV (HDTV), closed captioning (CC), new mobility devices capable of receiving TV, Described Video Service (DVS) and future revenue opportunities. The CRTC is completing a television review to examine these technological changes, and revenue options. Some initiatives have begun. In June 2006, the CRTC announced new rules for pay and specialty high definition (HD) channels clearly designed to encourage development of HD services in Canada. SCN awaits further development from Canadian Heritage to encourage HDTV roll out as consumer demand is increasing at a quicker rate than industry transition. The United States is in the process of digital conversion, with an expectation to turn off standard definition TV in February 2009.

In June 2006, the CRTC announced a comprehensive review of the future environment facing the whole Canadian broadcasting system. Following public submissions and industry commentary, a report is expected in June 2007. This report is expected to discuss the evolution of technologies, the change in how Canadians communicate, and the economic and social implications influencing the new communications and media environment. The Commission will also examine how the Canadian broadcasting system can remain relevant in the new environment, fostering Canadian culture and increasing public access to local, regional, national and international information and programming.

The educational broadcasting environment is also changing. TV Ontario recently announced an increase in its funding to focus on a number of initiatives over the coming years including: a transition from analog to digital technology (September 2007), a new multi platform distribution strategy, and a new customer-focused educational content aligned with the Ministry of Education and new current affairs program.

Knowledge Network continues to support the British Columbia film and television industry and produces more than 50 hours of programming a year with approximately 85 additional hours of pre-licenced programming acquired from independent producers in British Columbia and across Canada.

SCN continues to deliver programming, much of which is regionally produced, reflecting the rich culture and heritage of the region and programs that directly support Saskatchewan curricula. SCN is the only network mandated to focus specifically on stories that address the issues and concerns of the province's population.

The number of Saskatchewan viewers continues to increase despite the increased number of channels available and at a time when the viewing audience is declining, as experienced by national broadcasters in general. The October 2006 annual independent SCN viewer survey noted 32 per cent of Saskatchewan residents watch SCN often or sometimes compared to 25 per cent in the 2001 survey results. And the large majority, 94 per cent, of SCN viewers continue to rate the programming as good or very good, an increase from 81 per cent in 2005. These increases are associated with the public demand for the regional programming available on SCN.

SCN's strategy is to provide a regional voice within this highly competitive broadcast environment through the acquisition of rights to finished programs and financial participation to enable the development and production of programming. The chart below compares the program schedule of major local broadcast networks and reveals that other channels offer a national focus. SCN's focus on the niche "regional" market has increased viewing audience, and it is expected this trend will continue as SCN plans to expand regional programming and increase promotion of this product.

The chart below compares the program schedule of major local broadcast networks.

Broadcast Channel	Percentage (hours) of Regional Program Content for the week of July 2-8, 2006
CBC	1.8% (2.5 hours)
CTV	13.5% (19 hours)
Global	8.6% (14.5 hours)
SCN	29.8% (34.5 hours)

CANADIAN AND SASKATCHEWAN FILM AND VIDEO PRODUCTION INDUSTRY

Within the Saskatchewan production industry, local producers are at an advantage compared to other jurisdictions. The provincial incentives to do business in the province include the ability to have a local broadcaster (SCN) support their productions through a broadcast licence, SaskFilm via a tax credit and federally through approval of Canadian Television Fund funding (CTF). Recent changes to the provincial tax credits have just begun to make a difference in SCN's regional programming. In the past, to determine an eligible production budget from which to access the tax credit, SCN's licences had to be subtracted from the total eligible production costs. Now, the producer is able to access the tax credit rebate on the total cost of production, including SCN's licence. This will have a major, positive impact on the quality and quantity of SCN's regional series and productions.

Another factor in the television funding environment is the Canadian Television Fund. While SCN has managed to maximize its licence fees to access CTF funding, supply is always eclipsed by demand within the country. Although SCN's 2006-07 spending envelope increased, it remains difficult to predict from year to year.

Often, corporate broadcast groups, who own and operate a number of channels and specialty services, will not permit the participation of other broadcasters, preferring to keep exclusive rights (the right to premiere a program) to broadcast. Typically, a national broadcaster will have an exclusive rights period that exceeds two years, thereby making the program "stale" by the time it is available to other broadcasters. In addition, the amount of the licence fee is often set, and set high, by the national broadcasters, making it difficult for small broadcasters such as SCN to compete for such "exclusive rights."

Ultimately, SCN's strategy is to provide a regional voice within this highly competitive broadcast environment through the acquisition of rights to finished programs and financial participation enabling the development and production of programming.

Changes to delivery methods from on-air broadcasting to systems such as video on demand and Internet streaming could result in licence fee increases and a change in rights availabilities.

The film industry is a green and youth friendly industry, and SCN's strategy to allocate funding to regional programs will benefit Saskatchewan producers and aid in sustaining local operations and opportunities. This strategy not only enables the film and video industry but also responds to the demand in the public survey, which indicates 92 per cent of Saskatchewan television viewers want stories for, by and about Saskatchewan. SCN has entered into numerous partnerships within Saskatchewan's film and television community to ensure a consistent supply of programs produced for and about Saskatchewan. This strategy also allows for new sources of programming to replace the traditional supply of second window licence opportunities combating SCN's increased industry restrictions as noted earlier. SCN is also responding to public demand for more regional content by seeking strategic alliances with new partnerships such as SGI and the Office of the Treaty Commissioner.

TECHNOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

New distribution technology platforms could theoretically displace conventional broadcasters, such as SCN, in the market for television viewers. While Internet and mobile TV technology exist, the reality is that very high bandwidth systems needed to replace the current broadcasting model will not likely supplant conventional TV distribution. While it is becoming more popular for those who like to view television on their own schedule to use Video On Demand (VOD) and Personal Video Recorder (PVR) platforms, the distribution mechanisms required remain essentially the same. There is greater demand by viewers for High Definition (HD) content. There is also greater demand by broadcasters for the increased bandwidth required from Telesat to transmit HD programming.

The technological environment is creating new possibilities for local communication initiatives. At the same time, those who lack communication tools are excluded from participation in what has become known as the "digital divide." With the rapid advancements and convergence in technology, key issues for Saskatchewan are the ability to maintain capacity for research and development into new and innovative approaches and to decrease the digital divide. New developments and increased capacity may provide expanded opportunities, including upgrading technologies to keep pace with new expectations such as High Definition broadcast.

Equitable access to information and training opportunities are critical to creating a competitive workforce, a necessity for provincial sustainability within the global economy. With the widely dispersed population of Saskatchewan, the government's role in supporting distance learning as an essential training tool is vital. Further evaluation of emerging technologies continues to be on the forefront in order to address the challenges of creating efficiencies on all networks.

DISTANCE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Despite the rapid deployment of the Internet over the last six to nine years, the development of on-line learning programs and the declining rural population, there has been increased demand for televised distance learning. Pent up demand for televised distance learning has resulted in increased enrollment, and an increase in the number of provincial classrooms equipped to receive satellite delivery of televised learning. In 2005-06, E-Learning Network programming and student enrollment exceeded any year previous, with forecasts for the 2006-07 to be as high as 3,500 learners. The educational institutions and Saskatchewan Learning and Advanced Education and Employment indicate there will be a continued need for live televised distance learning and they depend on the existing delivery model.

E-LEARNING NETWORK CREDIT PROGRAM ACTIVITY

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Credit classes	49	54	57	57	56	71
Students enrolled	3,124	2,984	2,919	2,888	3,232	3,331
Broadcast hours	1,920	2,082	2,266	2,549	2,446	2,339

In many cases, the televised network is credited with providing the introduction to distance learning and is ideally suited as familiar, entry level, non-complex technology. Organizations using televised distance learning for the first time, such as the delivery of addictions counseling courses by the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology (SIIT), have found the medium to be highly successful in obtaining higher participation and retention rates.

Distance workshops, conference opportunities and data can be distributed via SCN's satellite networks. Other government departments and agencies disseminate information via SCN's Special Event Network and SCN currently provides distribution of the Proceedings of the Legislature on behalf of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. Creating further strategic alliances could increase the use of SCN's networks and allow the educator to reach their audience with programming in a cost effective manner.

SCN's ELN is streaming, with high quality, high bandwidth service and the only dedicated large scale, live, and interactive, distance education system for credit courses in Canada. Although, the current technology platform, installed in 1996, has exceeded its initial estimated lifetime of five years, reliability presently remains high at 99.97 per cent. The present estimated lifespan of the technology is unknown. In 2007-08, the ELN will continue to reach over 270 classrooms across the province.

Changes from 2006-07 Performance Plan

The 2007-08 SCN Performance Plan has been subtly refined resulting in the alteration of two measures. These changes do not alter the strategic direction of the organization; they only reflect the fact that this is a living document designed to continue to reflect an evolving organization.

Also, trendline information has been added to the performance measures, where available, to provide additional context and historical information to the reader.

Goals, Objectives, Actions and Measures

This section provides the detailed 2007-08 Performance Plan for SCN and outlines the rationale guiding the plan. Goals, objectives, and actions are identified to support SCN as a regional education broadcaster and storyteller. SCN provides cultural reflection and encourages economic activity through the operation of five provincial networks. Its programming covers a broad spectrum of topics, including informational, cultural, health, agricultural and educational to name a few. SCN has taken a role in providing its Saskatchewan-based audience with programs that address regional topics, with program appeal to all ages in all parts of the province. The development of economic opportunity by SCN encourages growth in a young and vibrant film and video industry.

Under each goal, a number of objectives have been established to support progress towards the broader goal statement. For each objective, key actions have been identified. They are the means for making progress toward the objectives and thereby the larger goal. To assess progress, performance measures have been developed.

A number of external factors impact SCN's key programs; some key cost drivers and related financial assumptions for 2007-08 are outlined below:

- Saskatchewan will not face an economic downturn in 2007-08, but rather, the expansion of employment and production opportunities that have occurred over the past years will continue. This will allow SCN to continue meeting the public viewers demand for regional broadcast programming.
- The funding supplied through the Canadian Television Fund, a major federal broadcast funding program, is projected to remain constant in the 2007-08 planning year. SCN will optimize this funding to ensure the Saskatchewan production community receives 90 per cent or more of the money available.
- Saskatchewan Learning and Advanced Education and Employment will continue to utilize the ELN for the 2007-08 school year to support distance learning to a minimum of 3,000 students. Technical upgrades are necessary to ensure high user reliability.
- Technical infrastructure operating costs consume 24 per cent of SCN's annual budget. Careful business case analysis is undertaken to ensure the best possible rates are obtained.

Events during the normal course of the business year may trigger re-allocations within SCN's budget with implications for the activities and intended outcomes to which those funds were originally allocated.

SCN's strategic plan is oriented around seven guiding principles embodied in our corporate culture:

- Integrity – treating people honestly, fairly and with respect
- Creativity and Innovation – nurturing creativity, risk-taking and innovation
- Accountability – for our actions and the management of our resources
- Equity – equitable access to lifelong learning and employment opportunities
- Communication – open, honest discussion, sharing information and teamwork
- Collaboration – working collaboratively, both internally and externally
- Excellence – the pursuit of excellence in all we do

GOAL 1

Cultural affirmation

SCN communicates with the region profiling the culture, history, places and people of our region through the business of broadcasting. SCN is unique as it strives to provide a Saskatchewan voice or a Saskatchewan viewpoint. SCN conducts an annual public survey, through an external vendor, that provides invaluable information about the viewing habits of the general public and audience preferences about the SCN schedule and programming. In the October 2006 survey, 81 per cent of the respondents felt public broadcasting was important. Saskatchewan viewers want to turn to a television channel that reflects their environment and is educational. Other local broadcasters operating within the province offer limited local programming. As a result, SCN's focus is to capitalize on this niche market.

OBJECTIVE 1 – *Meet the cultural needs of the Saskatchewan television viewing audience*

Critical to SCN's mandate as a "public education broadcaster" and, attested to through viewer surveys, there is a public demand for stories for, by and about Saskatchewan. As a public broadcaster, SCN continually looks for ways to increase the viewing audience. The annual viewer survey results over the past five years reveal a positive growth in the frequency that SCN is watched by the Saskatchewan television audience, from 25 per cent to 32 per cent. This is due in part to the regional relevance of the programming broadcast. To ensure relevant regional programs are available, SCN works with many stakeholders, including local producers, Saskatchewan Film and Video Development Corporation (SaskFilm), Saskatchewan Film Producers Association, Saskatchewan Motion Picture Industry Association, local producers, the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation, and Saskatchewan Learning and Advanced Education and Employment.

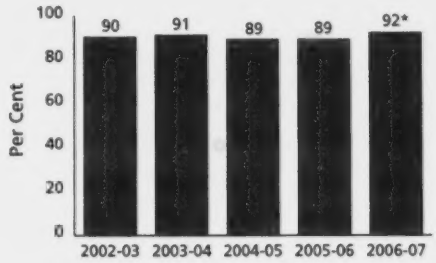
Key Actions for 2007-08

- Annual development of regional programming through a call for proposals from Saskatchewan film producers to meet viewer interests.
- Develop programming that represents topical interests of viewers, including the environment, substance abuse, literacy and Aboriginal programming as expressed in the Annual Saskatchewan Television Viewer Survey.
- Develop advertising and marketing strategies that profile new regional programming.

What are we measuring?

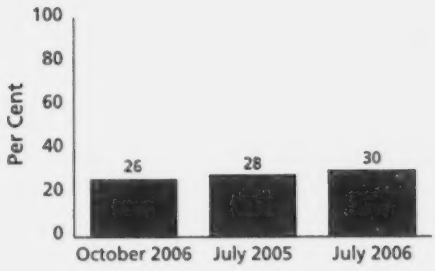
Percentage of viewers as a total of all television viewers who value regional programming

Progress to date



* *With a proportionately distributed province-wide sample of 1,000 people, the consulting firm can say with a 95% level of certainty that the overall results of the survey are within ± 3.1% of what they would be if the entire adult population of the province was polled.*

Percentage of on-air regional programming as a total of all SCN programming



OBJECTIVE 2 – Meet the public education broadcast needs of the Saskatchewan viewing audience

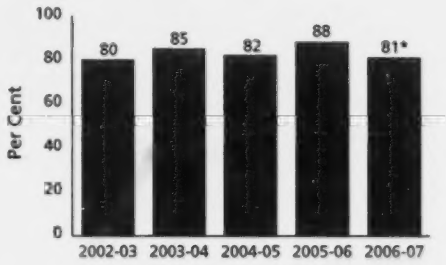
Key Actions for 2007-08

- Provide a unique blend of regional, national and international educational, informational, and cultural programming that will meet specific Saskatchewan viewer needs as expressed in SCN's Annual Saskatchewan Television Viewers Survey.
- Maintain two hours of broadcast each school day for curriculum-related programming for Saskatchewan Learning and Advanced Education and Employment.
- Maintain sufficient inventory levels and level of quality to fill the annual program schedule to industry standards.
- Meet industry standards for television viewing by obtaining and maintaining television technology and carriage service that is capable of serving viewers.

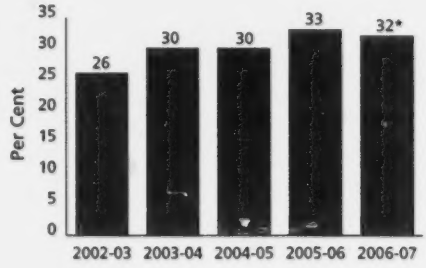
What are we measuring?

Percentage of viewers who value public education broadcasting

Progress to date



Percentage of total Saskatchewan viewers who watch SCN often or sometimes

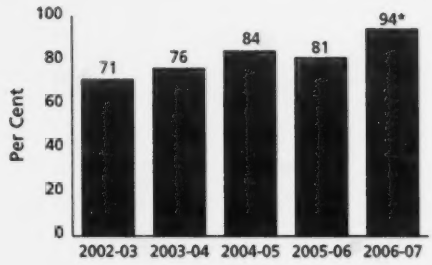


* *With a proportionately distributed province-wide sample of 1,000 people, the consulting firm can say with a 95% level of certainty that the overall results of the survey are within ± 3.1% of what they would be if the entire adult population of the province were polled in November 2005.*

What are we measuring?

Percentage of SCN viewers satisfied with programming

Progress to date

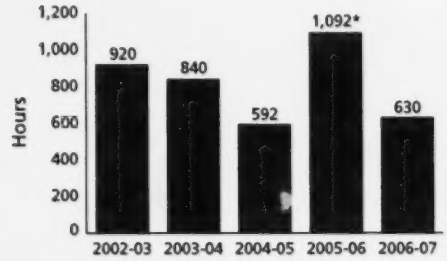


* *With a proportionately distributed province-wide sample of 1,000 people, the consulting firm can say with a 95% level of certainty that the overall results of the survey are within ± 3.1% of what they would be if the entire adult population of the province were polled in November 2005.*

What are we measuring?

Hours of program inventory annually maintained and replaced

Progress to date



* *In the 2005-06 fiscal year, one-time government funding was received and allocated to the purchase of broadcast program inventory hours.*

GOAL 2

Economic opportunity

SCN supports the Saskatchewan film and video industry by purchasing broadcast rights for existing programs and funding future programs, to create economic opportunity. In particular, the SCN licence supports small to mid-sized producers who find it difficult to otherwise acquire a licence.

This broadcast licence is a valuable mechanism that enables the producer to trigger other industry investment. Other financial partners encouraged to participate include SaskFilm, the Canadian Television Fund (CTF) and other regional and national broadcasters.

OBJECTIVE 1 – Leverage investment in Saskatchewan's film and video industry from national broadcasters, the federal government and other funding agencies through SCN's purchase of a film program's broadcast licence

SCN purchases broadcast rights for programming and funds development projects with local independent producers. SCN's financial commitment is often the catalyst attracting investment from outside the province. Historically, for every dollar SCN contributed to a Saskatchewan production, over nine times the amount is generated in production activity. SCN has supported over 600 local productions in 15 years on its public broadcasting network, and SCN's $11.0 million investment into regional programming has leveraged over $107.5 million in jobs and other economic activities in Saskatchewan. SCN expenditures on Saskatchewan film production provides a broadcast licence that enables further funding from national broadcasters, like CBC or Bravo, and allows incremental investment from the CTF.

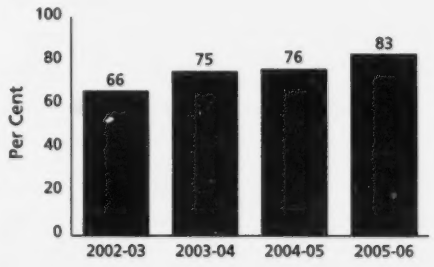
Key Actions for 2007-08

- Develop film and television projects through regional producers.
- Leverage funding from outside Saskatchewan to participate in local film and video projects.

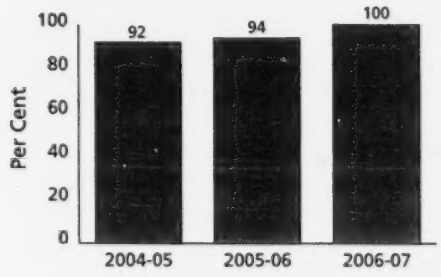
What are we measuring?

Percentage of SCN productions involving regional producers as a total of all SCN film and television productions

Progress to date



Percentage of CTF funding directed to Saskatchewan productions as a total of the CTF funds administered by SCN



OBJECTIVE 2 – Leverage economic activity in the Saskatchewan film and video industry through increased expenditure on regional programming

The Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation (CYR) has indicated that SCN is a primary mechanism by which emerging filmmakers break into the broadcast industry. SCN's funding generates jobs and develops opportunities for professional development, as local producers and technicians are able to work on more sophisticated projects. These projects, in turn, create further economic activity as most services are acquired from local contractors. The Saskatchewan Motion Picture Industry Association (SMPIA) and the Saskatchewan Film Producers Association encourage SCN to work with emerging and mid-level producers to develop regional programming.

CYR recognizes that SCN is important to the development of cultural programming that helps CYR meet its key goals and objectives in achieving cultural awareness and understanding in Saskatchewan. Spending on regional programs was 34 per cent of the total program budget in 2001-02 and 44 per cent in 2002-03. In 2003-04, SCN renewed its commitment to regional programming and increased its overall spending in this area to 57 per cent of SCN's total programming budget and 60 per cent in 2005-06. Current projections for regional programs acquired in 2006-07 are approximately 63 per cent of the total program budget. (Source: Aggregate data compiled from actual audited SCN expenditures)

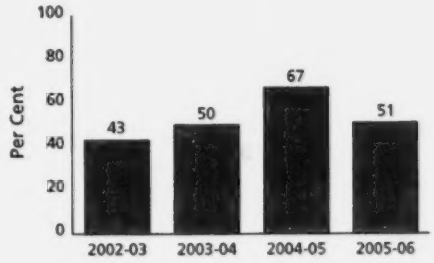
Key Actions for 2007-08

- Procure programming from the regional film and video industry through the SCN broadcast licence.
- Maintain current levels of regional series programming and increase production quality of regional television series.
- Maintain developmental services to the regional film industry, including working closely with the Saskatchewan Motion Picture Industry Association, the Saskatchewan Film Producers Association, Saskatchewan Culture, Youth and Recreation, and SaskFilm.

What are we measuring?

Percentage of regional programs purchased as a total of annual programming budget

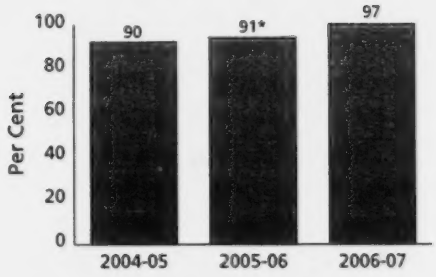
Progress to date



What are we measuring?

Percentage of satisfaction of direct clients with SCN services

Progress to date



* *The survey, conducted by an external party in December 2005, provides primary research about SCN client opinions.*

GOAL 3

Access to information and educational opportunities

SCN connects the remote and rural communities that require satellite technology to distribute educational and cultural programming. Equitable access to information and training opportunities is critical to creating a competitive workforce, a necessity for provincial sustainability within the global economy.

OBJECTIVE 1 – Increase distance learning and training opportunities

With the widely dispersed population of Saskatchewan, distance learning is an essential tool. SCN Technology and Infrastructure Services provide infrastructure and support to the corporation's networks and others to enable connectivity and deliver programming in the province. SCN works with Saskatchewan Learning and Advanced Education and Employment and equipment and service providers to continually identify opportunities to make its services more effective, efficient and reliable. With the rapid advancements and convergence in technology, key issues for Saskatchewan are the ability to maintain capacity for research and development into new and innovative approaches and to decrease the digital divide.

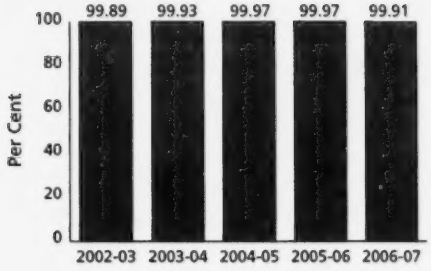
Key Actions for 2007-08

- Maintain and assess needs of learners in remote communities in partnership with Saskatchewan Learning and Advanced Education and Employment.
- Respond to community needs by providing satellite-based infrastructure for carrying learner programming (ELN).
- Meet the needs of Saskatchewan clients by providing Internet over satellite (DSN2).
- Respond to the needs of clients for public forums and training by providing satellite-based infrastructure for signal carriage (SEN).
- Respond to private and public demands by providing Internet over satellite.

What are we measuring?

Service reliability of networks

Progress to date



What are we measuring?

Number of new projects established

Progress to date

2

Trend analysis is not available as this is a new performance measure.

For More Information

Readers seeking additional information or wishing to comment on SCN's plan may consult the SCN website located at www.scn.ca. This site includes:

- detailed program information;
- program schedules;
- satellite distribution diagram;
- location maps; and,
- several interactive features.

Additional information may also be obtained by writing:
Saskatchewan Communications Network
Suite E-313, 2440 Broad Street
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 0A5